

Former U.S. Senator Edward William Brooke III Receives Congressional Gold Medal

October 28, 2009

President Obama Honors the First African-American Elected to the U.S. Senate by Popular Vote

WASHINGTON — President Obama today presented former U.S. Senator Edward William Brooke III with the Congressional Gold Medal for his unprecedented and enduring service to the Nation. The ceremony was held in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda.

The Congressional Gold Medal, designed and struck by the United States Mint, honors Senator Brooke's pioneering accomplishments in public service. Senator Brooke broke new ground at a time when few African-Americans held state or Federal office. He was the first African-American elected to the U.S. Senate by popular vote, serving with distinction for two terms, from January 3, 1967, to January 3, 1979. During his first term, Brooke was appointed to the President's Commission on Civil Disorders, where his work on discrimination in housing served as the basis for the 1968 Civil Rights Act.

Brooke began his career in public service as chairman of the Boston Finance Commission, where he established an outstanding record of confronting and eliminating graft and corruption. He proposed groundbreaking legislation for consumer protection and against housing discrimination and air pollution, and made state and national history in 1962 when he was elected Attorney General of Massachusetts. He also served in the U.S. Army's segregated 366th Infantry Regiment during World War II, attaining the rank of captain, and receiving a Bronze Star.

The medal's obverse (heads side), designed and sculpted by United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver Don Everhart, features an image of the senator with the inscription EDWARD WILLIAM BROOKE on the right side. The medal's reverse (tails side) depicts the U.S. Capitol Building at the top and the Massachusetts State House at the bottom between two olive branches. The center of the design showcases the inscription AMERICA'S GREATNESS LIES IN ITS WONDROUS DIVERSITY, OUR MAGNIFICENT PLURALISM HAS MADE THIS COUNTRY GREAT, OUR EVER-WIDENING DIVERSITY WILL KEEP US GREAT. Additional inscriptions on the reverse are ACT OF CONGRESS 2008 and MASSACHUSETTS STATE HOUSE. United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver Phebe Hemphill designed and sculpted the medal's reverse.

Public Law 110-260, which directed the United States Mint to strike the Congressional Gold Medal for Senator Brooke, also authorizes the agency to strike and sell three-inch and 1 1/2-inch bronze reproductions of the medal. A sale date for the bronze medals has not yet been determined. However, customers may obtain information about purchasing the bronze medals by visiting the United States Mint's online catalog at <http://www.usmint.gov/catalog> regularly or by calling 1-800-USA-MINT (872-6468). Hearing and speech-impaired customers with TTY equipment may get information by calling 1-888-321-MINT (6468).

The United States Mint, created by Congress in 1792, is the Nation's sole manufacturer of legal tender coinage. Its primary mission is to produce an adequate volume of circulating coinage for the Nation to conduct its trade and commerce. The United States Mint also produces proof, uncirculated and commemorative coins; Congressional Gold Medals; and silver, gold and platinum bullion coins.

An image of the Edward William Brooke Congressional Gold Medal is available at: </learn/coin-and-medal-programs/medals>.

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